

Connect

supporting student participation

ABN: 98 174 663 341

Number 164-165
April-June 2007
BIG DOUBLE ISSUE

▶ Valuing Young People?



Valuing young people is:

- ▶ Listening to young people.
- ▶ Recognising that their views are important.
- ▶ Responding positively to their views.

Whether local, state or nationwide, our governments represent the whole community (including those who don't vote!) so they should respond to the views of Australia's young people.

Valuing young people? is a platform for individual young people to let those in government know how they feel about issues that are important to them.



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this
issue*

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- Student Authors (Vic) and Researchers (Qld)
- Students Connecting Cultures
- Victorian and NSW State SRCs + *Local & International*
- Student Participation, SRCs and Rights
- Students' Environmental Action
- Resources: Environmental Resources; Seminars and Conference 2007; Postcard Campaign; Common Action Manual

& Incorporating the PASTA Newsletter #53

Connect

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Why does Connect exist?

Connect has been published bi-monthly since 1979.

It aims to:

- document student participation approaches and initiatives;
- support reflective practices;
- develop and share resources.

Cover:

Postcard Campaign: see page 34.

Connect:

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This Issue:

A big double issue like this is both a delight and a danger! Here you'll find a wealth of information and descriptions of participatory practices - a pile of inspiring reading to take you into the winter terms of Australian schools. But the downside is that there'll be a larger than usual gap before the next copy of *Connect* lands in your mailbox.



It will be even longer than usual this time - as the next *Connect* will also be a double issue, due out in October (so get me those articles and information by the end of September please!). I'm taking a short break again, but managing to fit in a couple of packed issues to keep us all going and inspired.

In the longer term: whither *Connect*? I asked this a few years ago, as I formally 'retired' from salaried employment: do I just keep publishing it *ad infinitum*, or is someone else willing to take it on? That moment passed without resolve. (It might have been symbolic to wrap up *Connect*, or pass it to someone at issue 150, after 25 years, but there were expectations and no takers. How does a goal of 180 issues ... 30 years ... in 2009 sound?) Now that I'm describing myself as a 'failed retiree', I'm reminded that passion doesn't retire, and that there remain useful and fascinating things to do - and sometimes you even get paid to do them. (In my first year of teaching in 1967, I remember that I realised with a jolt that someone was actually paying me to do this wonderful thing!)

So *Connect* ploughs on. To let you know what's coming up: we're holding over an article from Pascoe Vale Girls College about their leadership approaches until the next (double) issue. We expect there'll also be reports from the VicSRC Congress and NSW State SRC Conference. And we'd like to challenge you to ensure that that issue is as packed with interesting and useful reading as this one is.

On Value ... and Values ... in Education

We talk about **valuing** young people (see the cover of this issue), about recognising that young people can do **valuable** things (see all the articles here and in previous issues), and about young people tackling ideas about their and our **values**. For more details on this latter area, you'll need to wait until later. I'm working at the moment with two clusters of schools in which students have formed **Student Action Teams** to investigate and act on the area of **values**. I'm also working with another pair of primary schools where teams of students are researching **disengagement** from school: the reasons for it, and what students can do about it. And I've heard of another school where a Student Action Team is researching and tackling issues around **transition** of students from a Language Unit.

These examples take a new approach to 'consulting students'. Instead of asking students for quick 'top of the head' responses (on which we *may* act), we're challenging students to think deeply about such issues - to research them seriously - and to propose and take action to make changes. And we're providing them with time, support, funding and opportunities to carry out significant research and to influence the action of schools and other institutions. But more about that anon...

Roger Holdsworth

**NEXT ISSUE: another double issue:
#166-167: October 2007**

Deadline for material: end of September 2007

Lyndale Live

Students are broadcasting curriculum-based television shows, produced in their own studio, live into the classrooms at Lyndale Primary School in Melbourne's south-east.

At the school, there is a television set in each classroom, and a 15-minute daily *Today Show*-like program called **Lyndale Live** is broadcast into each classroom as the students eat their lunch. At other times specific student-made programs can be broadcast into these classrooms. For example, currently the grade 1 and 2 students are studying the topic of 'change' and they have watched the hatch and growth of chickens which has been broadcast from one of the cameras in a classroom. The whole school can tune in at any time to see progress.

The **Lyndale Live** student team also works on developing programs about school events and issues. They are currently preparing a segment showcasing the Living Eggs program. Some examples of the work of the **Lyndale Live** production crew are organising a *Lyndale Live Idol* competition, a documentary of the real life experiences of students sailing on the Enterprise as part of their history unit, the development of their multicultural garden and a report on the Level 3 camping adventures. The students manage most of the productions themselves including editing.

Lyndale Live opens with a catchy theme song, with words written by the students and music

created by teacher Len Mizzi. The viewers sing along, 'karaoke style'. This is followed by school announcements, special events and reports on curriculum activities and there are often original songs created by students to complete the broadcast.



The school uses this form of communication as a way of linking and combining the events happening across the school. It provides a purposeful medium for developing research skills and transferring knowledge, assists students to gain confidence with oral presentations and provides feedback, and provides a medium

for inclusive education and a way of showcasing the school's activities and events.

"The ratings are up and the reviews unanimously positive," said the project leaders, information and computer technology coordinator Karen Hall and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher Angela Dell'oreface. "Prep to Year 6 students had been producing television content including songs, plays, interviews and sports reports for several years. Then a recent *Investing in Our Schools* grant enabled the school to construct a sound-proof mini-television studio to house its production equipment, which includes an audio and video mixer, teleprompter and DVD player."

"The studio does everything a commercial one does, just on a smaller scale," said Ms Hall. "Working in the studio has helped students develop sophisticated production skills and understand what makes something newsworthy as well as increasing their critical awareness of the media's role in society. The children have a purposeful medium for developing research skills and transferring knowledge and have also gained confidence with their oral presentations."

The project points out that there are strong curriculum and skill links between this work and the Essential Learnings. Students are



involved in activities that assist them with developing skills to work as part of a team. Our school provides many opportunities for enriching students' language experiences. It provides a rich learning context."

Students gain technical skills from their roles on the other side of the camera. Peer mentoring is also a key part of the activities for both teachers and students. Students will be passing on their skills to other students.

Middle Years student Braden has been producing content to train younger students to use the equipment. "The whole process of creating a story and filming and editing is really fun," he said.

In 2006 the school also achieved a number of successes for its productions: ruMAD - Best Movie Category; Tournament of Minds - Highly Commended; Kahootz - winner of Primary Movie category; shortlisted for Australian Children's Short Film Festival (winner not announced yet); Bursary Winner - Science Drama; and Origin Energy Award.

For more information, contact Karen Hall: hall.karen.l@edumail.vic.gov.au or Angela Dell'orefice: dellorefice.angela.m@edumail.vic.gov.au or phone (03) 97952271.

(Parts of this article are adapted by the school from an article by Melanie Corben in the *Education Times*, February 22, 2007.)

involved in developing connections between research, curriculum activities and how information is presented to an audience. Students are involved with current media technology, with developing their visual literacy skills and are given opportunities to become creative producers, using innovative techniques for communication in today's world. Students have opportunities to gain confidence with using language, both written and oral, as well as gaining technical skills with equipment. They are involved in activities that promote reflection and evaluation of their productions.

Lyndale Live covers the whole curriculum and provides a forum for students to work in teams across the whole school. The teachers point out that the school is encouraging its students to be creators: "We are assisting our students to develop skills in visual literacy and are providing innovative ways to promote and develop skills associated with oral and written language. Encouraging them to be critical thinkers and observers (critical literacy) is an integral part of their activities. The students involved are engaged in a learner-centred program and as the students develop skills they become mentors for others. They are

With a large number of ESL students attending Lyndale Primary School, Ms Dell'orefice said, "Presenting and producing has provided opportunities to improve students' oral and literacy outcomes. Here, television is providing a medium for inclusive education and an avenue for showcasing our school's activities and events. The students are engaged and connected." As well as providing a means for students to develop skills in oral communication, this approach builds confidence when speaking to an audience.



MeTV: Interactive Educational Television

Are students making videos that should be seen across Australia? How can you share students' curriculum ideas and outcomes with other students ... with other classrooms?

The producers of MeTV, about to be launched within Australia in late April, say that their new initiative will enable just that. They claim that it is about to be the most exciting interactive education site ever launched in Australia.

On April 30th VEA (Video Education Australasia (www.vea.com.au), will launch its interactive education site MeTV: www.metv.net.au

which will give high school students an opportunity to share ideas with other students across Australia. This project builds on 25 years experience as producers of educational videos and DVDs and will showcase students' work in a secure educational setting.

"It's 'Youtube' and 'MySpace' for school students, but with a profoundly educational basis," said Mark McAuliffe. And he went on to outline some practical benefits from participation: "Prizes can be won just by participating. In addition to mobile phones, digital cameras, MP3 players and cinema tickets, a student will be flown from interstate where necessary to co-host the last show. Another major prize includes a two-day recording session at Studio 52 for a high school band."

The program has the format of a story with consistent characters. But, along with this cast, students themselves will be the stars as they report on developments in their school in music, dance, poetry, art, curriculum projects and video vox pops.

Each week, new episodes will be recorded in a TV studio in Melbourne and eventually, the 8-minute program will air weekly for 18 weeks. The show itself will be screened on the internet and will also



be digitally delivered to servers in 700 schools across Australia through the company's digital delivery affiliate ClickView.

"Security for schools and students is guaranteed," said Mark. "When schools purchase a copy of the DVD they will be issued with a code number. In order for students to upload material onto the web they must first log in for their personal identification as well as identifying their school and school password from the teacher."

MeTV can be seen as a model of multimodal literacy that supports the implementation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), drawing together the three strands and supporting student growth across the domains. It has similar relationships to curriculum frameworks in other states.

MeTV is fundamentally an ICT project that supports and encourages students to communicate by sharing their own thoughts and thinking processes. In addition, characters within the program have been designed to represent a range of curriculum areas (or discipline based learning domains). The creators of MeTV want students to engage in this project which aims to encourage student activity and development in physical, personal and social learning.

Curriculum-based Characters

The MeTV weekly show is character-based. The characters have been designed to reflect different student interests and even different curriculum focal points. “We think that teachers of IT, English and Media may be the first in line to introduce their students to MeTV but we think other subject areas are well represented,” said Mark.

For example, **Hanna** is keen on sport, health, and outdoor pursuits of all kinds. **Deon** is your standard computer whiz with an interest in science, computers, technology, fractals and the space-time continuum; he also hosts his own radio show which will play on the website. **Salma** is fascinated with fashion and design, food and hospitality, choral music and poetry. **Dan**, the surfer/skateboarder is the popular culture freak. His passion is for music, video and sport. **Rosa** is the most civic-minded of the team, she is a stickler for precision and perfection and is passionate about cleaning up the environment, banning bullying in schools, solving the problems of teen depression, and making sure everyone’s registered to vote in state and federal elections.

New Shows Each Week

MeTV is designed to be a showcase for student ideas and curriculum-based projects. But it’s also a notice board for students to raise issues about things that concern them, including the best approaches to homework/study, bullying or student councils in schools. Students may take a broader perspective and consider concerns about the environment, young people’s rights, teen depression, or a youthful perspective on government policy, because students will all be voters in just a few years. But there’s plenty about the arts as well. MeTV is the digital forum for



young people to share student-produced videos, poetry, paintings, fashion, woodwork, sculpture, music, dance and digital stories.

For more information, check MeTV at www.metv.net.au or contact Video Education Australasia through www.vea.com.au



1000 Authors

At Drouin Cluster in Gippsland, 1500 students from Year 3 to Year 9 are online in the Learning Village.

In late 2006, 1000 of these students came together at Drouin Secondary College for its **Day of 1000 Authors**.

Teachers in the Cluster's secondary college and 10 primary schools set the students a diversity of challenges involving the creation of illustrated texts and multimedia projects. Texts and multimedia presented on the day included illustrated children's stories (narratives), instructional texts, non-fiction texts, interactive maths multimedia and Microworlds projects. (Readers will not be able to open the Microworlds projects unless they have the Microworlds program installed on their computer.)

All student presentations featured work of the authors from a blank page, with students creating their own artwork, animations, and page layouts. Approximately 140 samples of the work of these authors can be found at the Cluster's homepage www.drouincluster.vic.edu.au. Simply click the link to '100 illustrated stories'. Other student websites are also accessible from this page.

A visit to the 100 stories page is a visit to a very rich literacy environment. It is regularly visited by students, and is a constant addition to schools' literacy resources. Teachers are encouraging students to access the 100 stories site for leisure reading during class literacy time.

ICT skills needed by teachers to pass on to students are presented in the Cluster's 'Colour and Movement' professional learning program. This program focuses on ICT-based literacy from Prep to Year 8. The program introduces tutorials in using Paint, animation, desktop publishing, graphing, multimedia and web design.

A straw poll of students across Cluster primary schools in relation to '100 stories favourite texts' lead to the following observations:



- For two wonderful narratives involving turtles, read *The Different Turtle* by Ebony (pictured) and Kira and Meg's *Jimmy Comes Out of his Shell*. Each story has a simple moral and is sure to delight readers of any age;
- Food fans will love Keira and Tayla's *The Land of Broccoli* and *The Fruits' Quest to Find the Perfect Home* by Brooke and Leah;
- Having a special 'cult following' amongst young male readers are *Jecto* by Ben and *The Cubby Hut Gang* by Jeb (pictured);
- Keith's alien invasion animation called *The Army of Aliens* is a favourite in all schools, as are the instructional texts, especially *How to Fit into a New School* by Amber and *How to Draw a Dog's Face* by Shannon;
- A particular favourite is Jayden's *How to Bowl Different Cricket Deliveries*;
- Wonderful examples of the authors' creativity in designing artwork are evident in the A to Z multimedia projects. Favourites include Kira and Paula's *A to Z of Pizza Toppings* and Yolanda and Meg's *A to Z of Animals*.

Readers who log onto the Drouin Cluster homepage and read the work of its young authors are guaranteed a rich literacy experience.

In 2007 the theme for the **1000 authors day** is *Day of 1000 Mathematicians and Scientists*. Watch this space.

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Researched by Students for Students

Students from Redcliffe State High School in Queensland will make a special presentation at a teaching conference later this month thanks to a unique research project on post-school options.

The Year 10 students undertook a Learning Engagement Online (LEO) project last year that explored the barriers that prevent students from going to university after Year 12.

The students have been invited to present their research and documentary DVD at the *Engaging Boys in Literacy Conference* at the Sunshine Coast University on April 27.

LEO teacher Kylie Smith said the project was an initiative of the Sunshine Coast region that aimed to re-engage at-risk students using an ICT-rich learning environment.

"It uses innovative technologies to foster learning relationships to build students' self-belief, success and confidence," Ms Smith said. "As part of the project, the students surveyed other school children to investigate the problems and barriers that prevent students considering university after school. They found that many seniors in their final years of schooling were not fully aware of the opportunities and courses available at university."

Ms Smith said the students used the survey results to create a short documentary film. "The intention was to create a resource that would enable high school students to make informed decisions about their future," she said. "The students hope to market the DVD: *Destination Uni: Way to Go!* to other high schools this year."

Redcliffe State High School student Ashley Woodward said one of the best aspects of the documentary was that it is made for students by students.

"We believe students who finish Year 12 deserve the knowledge to make the best career choices to suit their preferred career path," Ashley said. "The documentary is entertaining, informative and really appeals to its audience."

Ms Smith said students who worked on the project gained multimedia, multi-literacy and higher order thinking skills. "It's exciting and satisfying that these students now see a very different future for themselves, a future that may now include university education," she said. "They will also play a part in improving the future of many other young people through the distribution of the DVD."

For more information, or to get a copy of the DVD, e-mail Kylie Smith at ksmit88@eq.edu.au

For information on the *Engaging Boys in Literacy Conference*, phone Sunshine Coast regional manager Christine Sunner on 07 3881 9624 or mobile: 0408 786 883.

(Reprinted from *Education Views* March 16, 2007)



Learning Engagement Online teacher Kylie Smith works with Redcliffe State High School students Ashley Woodward and Daniel Handsley on a research project on post-school options.

Connecting Cultures



Students at University High School in Melbourne are leading a project to promote mental health and wellbeing in their community. The project aims to bring together people from diverse backgrounds to increase understanding and positive interactions between members of the school community: students, parents, teachers and community groups.

The project has been developed in 2006-2007 with support from VicHealth's *Building Bridges* program. It has a primary aim of enhancing school harmony and empowering our community. We have called our project *Connecting Cultures*. Within the school, the project is led by a Student Leadership group that has been set up to encourage dialogue and to organise a range of specific projects including *Connecting Communities - a City-Rural Link*.

The approach developed by the school has put the students at the centre of the whole school initiatives to build cultural bridges. This has meant a focus on student leadership, on recognising and celebrating student participation in music and sport, and on student and teacher initiatives to increase parent participation in school life at UHS.

So far, students have organised, presented and taken part in assemblies and activities in the following areas:

- Several of the school's students who come from diverse backgrounds are elite sportspeople. Their testimonials were the focus of one assembly that coincided with the Commonwealth Games.
- Students initiated action around Reconciliation and National Sorry Day, including student participation in the Sorry Day March. A group of students met and listened to the stories of people from the stolen generation, made banners and displayed posters and other literature around the school that recognised the significance of these events. There was a lunchtime recital of poetry by a member of the local Aboriginal community and the week culminated in a student-organised school assembly with a guest speaker from Reconciliation Victoria. A team of our students also attended a Youth Forum on Reconciliation at the Melbourne Museum.
- Music and dance was a focus at another assembly, with students performing dances from the countries and regions represented by some of our students at UHS. Students taught their peers dances from a number of countries such as Turkey, Somalia, India, Hawaii and America. These were then presented at the school assembly along with some musical items where students played culturally significant instruments, not seen in the mainstream music program of the school.
- Our final assembly for 2006 was named *Celebrations* – with 'light' as a common theme. Each of the major religions represented in the school community were included. Christianity and Christmas, Islam and Eid ul Fitr, Buddhism and the Buddha's birthday (Vesaka Puja), Judaism and Hannukah and Hinduism and Dipawali. One of the greatest highlights of

the assembly was the respect that students afforded to the students participating and the appreciation shown to the exposure they had to religious prayers such as the Muslim call to daily prayers.

Some of the other areas that we have focused on include:

- **Camps:** encouraging students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, especially girls, to attend school camps;
- **Connecting Cultures through Cuisine:** all Year 7 students participated in a 100 minute cooking session on the foods and spices of Asia, cooking and eating an Asian meal;
- **Year 7 International Day:** students brought food, costumes and other cultural items for a 'show and tell';
- **LOTE Week:** in addition to traditional language-based activities, students had the opportunity to taste the foods from the Horn of Africa catered for by the Sorghum Sisters, hear music played by a Turkish parent and learn dances of the Middle East;
- **International Cultural-Diversity Week:** where the emphasis was to celebrate the cultural diversity of our country including a cultural costumes day;
- **At Parents/Teacher interviews:** parents from CALD communities were encouraged to attend by making personal phone contact with them and providing interpreters as required.

In addition to the above activities, the project has moved outside the school boundaries to work with parents and students and with a community action group at the nearby Carlton Primary School. Their school grounds were replanted and mulched to improve the physical and social environment for the school community. This continued with a 'community crawl' of students and teachers through the suburb to make connections and build bridges with the local community.

This year on International Women's Day a group of 40 students visited Royal Women's Hospital and presented flowers and cards to the staff in appreciation of their fabulous work for women. The students also had the opportunity to see some of the work that the staff do in the daily care of women by visiting the nursing stations and patient wards and presenting flowers and cards to some of the patients as well. The aim of this project was to strengthen the students' appreciation and understanding of community services and the multifaceted roles that women play. As well as this we are encouraging our students to see the importance of acknowledging the work of others. Whole school initiatives like this are integral in developing a sense of what it means to be a citizen.

In 2007, we move into Stage 2 of this project, and this includes an emphasis on the wider community involvement without losing the momentum of active student decision-making and involvement within the school and in our neighbourhood. The focus is on providing parents with the opportunity to participate in activities with other parents. There is a focus on assisting parents to better understand teenagers and the issues that are relevant to growing up in the 21st century. We hope to harness and further the interest parents show in their child's secondary years of schooling. We are aiming to help develop happy and positive relationships with their children and a sense of connectedness to the school community. It is also an opportunity for adults to share their own experiences with others and to enjoy making connections that would not have otherwise been likely.



Planned events include a *Creating Conversations* evening which is a student-led evening of interactive activities that promote conversations between teenagers and their parents. We aim to provide an evening of fun activities in first language for those parents of our CALD students.

The *Choice not Chance* evening will be a presentation by an educator from Family Planning Victoria giving parents information and ideas on how to talk about sexuality issues with their children. Teaching your children the language of optimism aims to assist parents to communicate with their children using optimistic language. *Surviving your teenager* focuses on successfully assisting children in their journey from childhood to adults while maintaining one's own sanity. Finally, a *Keys Please* evening is presented by VicRoads to assist parents in being a responsible and helpful driving instructor whilst their child is on their learner permit.

At the moment, another student project called *Stairways to Connecting Cultures*, is at the planning stage. This will be an exhibition of students' art in the stairways of the school. This project will focus on art with a multi-cultural flavour.

After the success of an after-school program last year, another after-school activities program has been organised to run from Term 2. A broad range of subsidised activities including lacrosse, yoga, bollywood dance, self defence and circus skills have been offered to students.

The 2007 school year and the **Connecting Cultures** Project at University High School will conclude with a *Twilight Cultural Feast*. This will be an opportunity for families of UHS to come together and celebrate the wonderful cultural diversity of our school community, with a range of entertainment provided by our wonderfully talented students.

Monica Chetty

University High School

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VicSRC Building Towards State Congress 2007

The VicSRC, the statewide network of Student Councils and secondary students in Victoria, is busy organising the VicSRC Congress to be held at **Collingwood Town Hall on Friday May 18** - all the details are on the next two pages.

The VicSRC Executive currently consists of nine secondary students who have come together to plan the VicSRC Congress and to steer the development of the organisation. There's Georgia (year 9 at University High School and Secretary of their SRC), Ruthie (year 12 at University HS and President of the SRC), Sarah (year 11 at Macleod College and Secretary of the SRC there), Sharon (year 12 at Mentone Girls High School and President of the SRC), Gameda (year 11 at Roxburgh College and Vice-President of the SRC), Linh (year 11 at Braybrook College and President of its SRC), Nicole (year 12 and President of the Caroline Chisholm



Catholic College SRC), Jimmy (year 12 and Deputy President of the Caroline Chisholm Catholic College SRC) and Lucas (year 12 and active in trying to set up an SRC at his school - not in picture).

This executive is really keen to involve other students - particularly those from regional and rural centres. Travel subsidies are available, or telephone hook-ups are possible for meetings. Contact the VicSRC on 03 9267 3744 or toll-free outside Melbourne on 1300 727 176 or by e-mail: vicsrc@yacvic.org.au

Cluster meetings or being held in Bendigo, Wellington, Hume and Whittlesea areas leading up to the Congress - contact the VicSRC for more details.



Coming to the VicSRC Congress?

What you need to do ...

VicSRC State Congress

*for Victorian
secondary school
students ...
Make sure you're
represented!*

**Friday
May 18, 2007
9 am - 3 pm
Collingwood
Town Hall**

Hoddle Street, Abbotsford

***\$15 per person
for VicSRC members;
\$25 per person
for non-members***

Register:

- Tell the VicSRC *now* that your SRC will be represented at the Congress.
- Fill in the registration form sent to schools with the VicSRC newsletter.

Suggest topics:

- Within the SRC, discuss what topics should be raised at the Congress.
- If possible, find out what other students think are important topics.
- Think about topics at SRC, school and community levels.
- Fill in the registration form with your suggestions.

Offer:

- To lead a discussion group at the Congress around a topic.
- Use the registration form to offer to present.

Proposals:

- Start working on some proposals for what students through the VicSRC could or should be doing on these topics.

Nominate:

- **As a *state* representative:**
Think about nominating yourself or a fellow student for the VicSRC Executive.
- **As a *local* representative:**
Think about offering to help set up a local cluster group of the VicSRC.

**Registration forms are already in schools,
or available from www.yacvic.org.au/vicsrc/congress
or phone: 03 9267 3744 or e-mail: vicsrc@yacvic.org.au**

Draft Congress Outline

Plans for the 2007 VicSRC Congress include:

A meeting and sharing session

...

Two sessions of **workshops**
on issues raised by students:

- SRC issues
- School-based issues
- Community issues

...

Information and Discussion
about the VicSRC
and how it operates

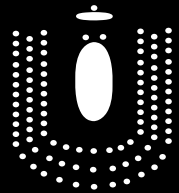
...

Preparation of motions

...

LUNCH

...



Congress Session:
a formal parliamentary-
style debate to establish
priorities and policies
for the VicSRC

...

Election of VicSRC
Executive members

...

Planning meetings
within local clusters

You will take away ...

Contacts and friendships
around the state

Information about
other SRCs

Shared experiences in
running consultations

Knowledge, skills, information
and ideas about SRC, school
and community issues;
strategies based on students'
experiences

Ideas about how your SRC
can work with others
locally and across the state
to be more effective

Skills in preparing
arguments and
formal motions

A full stomach to
energise your full
brain!

Experience in formal
decision-making
around shared ideas
and commitments on
important issues

Representation of
your voices and
interests

Opportunities to start
meeting with nearby schools
that share your concerns

North Coast Regional SRC

Hi, I'm Sasha Hunt, one of two student representatives for the North Coast Region on the 2007 NSW SRC. I'd like to write about my local area SRC meeting.

Firstly, I'd like to start by mentioning that SRCs (Student Representative Councils) operate in every secondary school in NSW. These forums enable the student voice to be heard.

I think student input into decision-making processes is a very important component for the school community. I believe that each SRC has a duty to advocate for the student body and to act as a leadership group for **all** students in the school.

An important milestone for the SRCs operating all over NSW was the creation of the Charter for SRCs. This charter is made up of seven guidelines to assist SRCs in effective practice. The seven sections are: **Involved Students, Making Real Decisions, In Many Places, For Everyone, Chosen Fairly, Well Supported, and Appropriately Recognised.**

Yesterday my own local area SRC meeting was held. Students from nine schools attended: Casino High School, Southern Cross High School, Nimbin High School, Lismore High School, Tweed River High School, Richmond River High School, Alstonville High School and Byron Bay High School. The meeting began with two reports from the two State SRC delegates: Cody from Byron Bay High School, who is on the State SRC Working Party, and myself, a member of the NSW SRC.

Here's a bit of background information about these two State groups:

The State SRC Conference Working Party

The role of the State SRC Conference Working Party is to organise the State SRC conference, which takes place in August each year. Up to 130 students from SRCs from all over NSW participate. At each conference, a Student Forum is held. Each region is invited to put forward one topic for debate. The Working Party representatives have met once this year and discussed ideas for the 2007 State SRC Conference theme. The theme for the 2007 State Conference will be about ways for students to connect with each other. This theme will be supported by SRCs in all secondary schools in 2007-08.

The NSW SRC

The 2007 NSW SRC has the responsibility to take action on any resolutions passed at the State SRC Conference during their term of office. The 2007 NSW SRC also has set itself two projects that aim to improve school life for all students throughout the State. Some actions of the 2007 NSW SRC include the creation of a multimedia resource that will build school spirit and to encourage schools to improve their school environments through a competition called *Enviro Inspiro!*

But I have slipped off track a bit haven't I ... after all, I was writing about my local area SRC meeting, so back to the meeting ...

After the State SRC reports, all SRC members in attendance took part in a short Drug Awareness Workshop. This workshop asked SRC students for ideas to increase students' knowledge of and awareness about drugs and their affects. The workshop also discussed ways in which drug use could be reduced by young people .

Then each of the schools gave a report on their local SRC projects and what the aims are for their SRCs. Most schools commented that their SRCs helped to organise a school social this term. Many schools said that they also run student leadership programs in conjunction with their partner Primary schools. Other schools commented that they are reviewing their anti-bullying policy. Many schools also mentioned that they have an overall focus on improving school environments throughout their SRCs. I reminded SRCs to enter the NSW SRC's competition *Enviro-Inspiro*.

At the conclusion of the meeting, we discussed Youth Week and how SRCs can support the NSW Public Schools Core Values statement. All schools and SRCs are encouraged to get involved in these worthwhile activities. These are both excellent projects to promote school spirit.

At our next local area SRC meeting, an election will be held to determine the students to attend the NSW State SRC Conference. SRCs are a great way for students to get involved!

Sasha Hunt

For more information about the NSW State SRC, see:
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studleadsr/index.php